

The Macdougall Street Affair

Astro the Seer Solves a Dynamite Mystery

By ALAN BRAGHAMPTON

Drawing by Karl Anderson



IT'S a pity you are unhappily married," said the Master of Mysteries, gazing languidly at the red and gold ceiling above him. He seemed to pay little attention to the thick, hairy hand of his client, which lay limp on the velvet cushion.

Opposite him the bull-necked, red-faced man sat staring in amazement, no longer wearing the contemptuous, amused expression with which he had entered the astrological parlors of the slim, romantic-looking young man in the turban and silk robes. Like many another unbeliever that had come to test Astro in that very room, his look had changed gradually from scorn to interest, until now his eyes were fixed on the palmist with eager curiosity and perplexity.

"No doubt it's her fault," Astro continued; "for she is indifferent and selfish. It might be better if you let it come to an actual quarrel, and separated." Astro reached for his narghile, and took a long, bubbling whiff of perfumed smoke, as if, so far as he was concerned, the matter had been weighed and settled.

There came at this moment the sound of a muffled electric bell. His client still gazed stupidly in front of him, but said nothing. He did not seem to notice the signal.

Astro, however, rose and went to a pair of black velvet curtains hanging at one side of the wall behind his visitor's back. There was a mirror hung above which reflected the stocky form of the man at the little table, the bulge of a revolver in his hip pocket, and the round head with its short cropped hair. The head did not turn. Astro parted the hangings deftly and peered within. On a level with his eyes was a small square window, lighted from behind. Against the glass a sheet of paper was fastened, and on it was written in a feminine scrawl, "Plain clothes man. Working on the Macdougall-st. dynamite case."

Astro picked up a magnifying glass, dropped the curtains, and returned to his client. Seating himself, he looked carefully at the moons in the detective's palm; after which he took a small crystal sphere from a drawer in the table, set it on the cushion, and seemed to lose himself in prolonged contemplation of the mysteries hidden within it. His vis-à-vis fidgeted restlessly.

"You are a busy man indeed," commented Astro, half aloud. "Not only are you keeping your eye on the crooks around the Rennick Hotel, and investigating several pool room layouts, but you come up here in reality to see if my place is, as you would call it, 'on the square.' How on earth you have time for all this, when you are so puzzled about the Macdougall-st. business, is more than I can see. You must be a man of extraordinary resource."

The officer stared like a child at the dreamy-eyed Oriental before him. "Gosh!" he said almost plaintively. Then he rose and thrust his big, hairy hands into his pockets. "Say, what do you know about that dynamite affair, anyway?" he asked, as if his mind was made up on the subject.

Astro smiled. "Nothing. I'm too busy to trouble about things that are not any of my business."

"But what if it was your business?" continued the policeman eagerly. "What if I made it an object to you?"

"Ah!" answered the seer. "No doubt I could tell you anything you wished to know."

The man drew out a pocket-book. "See here," he said, tapping it, "I ain't rich by any means; but I'm up against it on this case, and if you can look into them glasses and give me a tip, I'll make it worth your while!"

Astro laughed. "Oh, it's not quite so simple as that. You must understand, my dear sir, that I can do absolutely nothing without coming into direct personal contact with the vibrations emanating from the scene or from the individual. I can tell about you, because you happen to be before me; but I should have to be present at the place in order to become sensitive to the occult influences that have permeated

the whole air about the crime or mystery. Do you understand?"

The officer evidently did not understand; but he was in no wise deterred from making use of this power that had so impressed him. "I'll take you up there," he offered.

"Very well," said Astro. "I'll help you on this case, Mr.—"

"McGraw."

"—Mr. McGraw, with the distinct understanding, however, that I am to be left to do what I like, undisturbed and unwatched. Utter abstraction, my dear sir, the Tatvic Rhythm, is in all instances absolutely necessary. I see the invisible; I hear the inaudible; I touch the intangible."

The detective stood like a cow gazing on an eighth wonder of the world. "All right," he said lamely. "When'll you come?"

"At three this afternoon. Meet me in front of the place—No. 950, isn't it? That's right. But first I should like to know what you have learned about the matter."

WELL, it's just this way. There's a chap at No. 950 named Pietro Gallino. He has a wholesale wine and grocery shop, and does a considerable importing business; he also acts as a sort of local banker. Two weeks ago he got a letter that was made up of words torn out of a newspaper, telling him to leave a thousand dollars in ten-dollar bills underneath a certain bench by the archway into Washington Square. He was to put it there the next night, or else his place would be blown up. He went dippy about it, of course, and reported it to the police right away. We told him to put up a dummy package and carry out instructions. He did that, and the place was watched. Nobody came, of course. The next day there was an explosion in front of his store, and it smashed up the windows and doors good and plenty. Then he got another letter, something like the first one, only he

was to put the money in a certain fire bucket on the third floor of a building at 231 Vesey-st. Somebody came that time; but, with three exits to the building and us watching everyone of them, we couldn't nab our man. The next day there was an explosion on top of Gallino's building, and then came this last letter."

He took from his pocketbook a sheet of paper, folded. On it were pasted irregular fragments from the advertising pages of "The Era." It read as follows:

Have a thousand dollars with you, day and night. We will tell you how to pay before the 12th. If any more tricks, will blow you to pieces sure!

It was signed with the dread insignia of the Black Hand,—a skull and crossbones and a rudely drawn hand.

Astro looked at it carelessly, pressed it to his forehead, fingered it sensitively, and then put it in his pocket with composure. "Very well. I get from this letter, even now, a subtle impression, and when I encounter these vibrations in the flesh I shall immediately recognize them. The criminal has a violet soul, tending toward purple. Purples are malicious and very dangerous. This aura distresses me." And he foppishly sniffed at a bottle of smelling salts.

The effect of this was not lost on McGraw. "I don't know how the mischief you get wise," said that worthy officer; "but it don't matter how you turn the trick, just so you deliver the goods. I'll see you at three then. And be mighty careful of that paper!"

ASTRO nodded impassively as his visitor left. Then he pressed an electric button, and Valeska Wynne, his young assistant, entered the room with a free and easy, graceful, girlish stride. She smiled quickly, and shrugged her eyebrows at the departing plain clothes man.

"Easy enough to tip you that time," she remarked. "I passed him on the stairs with a policeman, and caught a few words. Anything in him?"

"No money; but it's a good advertisement, and it gets me in with the police, so that I'll be able to rely upon them for help from time to time. Did you notice the chalk on his sleeve?"

"Sure; but I didn't have time to tell you, and I knew you'd get that. Billiard cue, I suppose?"

"Hardly—not in this Broadway neighborhood; though it's possible. Billiard cue chalk hereabouts is generally green in color. That white stuff probably means a pool room. He's been nosing round illegal race track gambling places, I imagine. At least I told him so, and it took. Notice the dab of gilt paint on his vest?"

"No," answered the girl.

"They're rebronzing the furnishings and decorations in the Rennick lobby to-day. Inasmuch as that is the notorious hotel for crooks of all descriptions, I saw at a glance that he had been there. Did you observe his handkerchief?"

"Oh, yes," said she eagerly, glad at last to have caught one point in the train of the master's deduction. "It was a small one—a woman's, of course."

"And the top button of his coat?"

"No." Valeska's face fell.

"Sewed on with fine copper wire instead of thread. What do you make of that?" He surveyed her quizzically.

She puckered her pretty face for a moment, then raised her fair blue eyes interrogatively. "They seem contradictory, don't they? The handkerchief would suggest marriage; unless it's a souvenir—"

"No. He used it too strenuously, I'm afraid, for any sentiment to be attached to it; his only emotion seemed to be disgust at its size—or lack of size. Hum—his wife's, of course. She's alive, and with him, or her handkerchiefs



"I No Trow-a da Bomb!" He Screamed.

wouldn't be where he'd pick one up in a hurry; probably mixed in with his when the laundry came home."

"It might be his sister's," suggested the girl.

"Why didn't she sew his buttons on for him, then? Oh, it's simple enough. But your tip was what really helped me most with McGraw—that's his name—after all. He now wants me to help him solve the Macdougall-st. mystery."

In a few minutes Astro went over the history of the affair, and laid the last threatening letter on the table. Valeska inspected it carefully.

"These pieces are all cut from the advertising pages of 'The Era,'" she said finally.

"Good! Except these two, which, you see, instead of being cut, are torn along the edge. Not much of a clue, but worth remembering."

"What do you know about the Black Hand?" Valeska asked.

"As much as anyone, and that is—nothing. Even Petrosini, the greatest of metropolitan Italian sleuths, has said that there is no such thing. Warburton, on 'Immigration,' has some very interesting chapters concerning the bloodthirsty Sicilian and his criminal organization. I recommend that you read such things—I'll give you the volume and the page number—for your own instruction. No, there is no Black Hand; but the rather melodramatic name is made use of from time to time by individuals bent on extortion. It is a great terrorizer. In this instance, the work is clearly that of one person. He may have got his bombs from another individual; but Number Two is entirely innocent of what they were to be used for. The affair looks simple. I'll get my vibrations easily enough; you just see if I don't! It isn't half so difficult as that interior epicycoid I was at work on last night. Be ready at three o'clock."

UNTIL that time Astro the Seer was characteristically picturesque. Curious women listened to his talk about them in delight, men came with ill disguised scorn and left the studio in admiration, and through it all he gazed into crystals, and intoned cabalistic words. When the last client, however, had disappeared, Astro threw off his turban and robe, yawned prodigiously, and became his real, alert, keen eyed self. With Valeska Wynne he walked rapidly down Fifth-ave., across Washington Square, and along Macdougall-st. to No. 950, where he found McGraw awaiting him in some impatience. At once the mask fell again over Astro's handsome, poetic face; no summer saunterer seemed ever more idle or indifferent.

"Ah, here you are, sir," said the detective with evident relief as he tipped his hat to Valeska. "And here's the joint."

The house still showed heavy signs of the recent outrage. The broken frames of the front windows were boarded up, and several beams held the tottering lumber in place. The sidewalk was not yet repaired, but had been hastily covered with loose planks. Evidently the bomb thrower had created a terrific disturbance. Every pane of glass in the building was shattered. As a result of the latest attempt upon Gallino's life, the whole top of the store was a mass of broken timber in front; the back part of the roof seemed not to have been disturbed. A small group of silent, wide eyed Italians hung about the place, eying the evidences of destruction in awe.

Astro scarcely gave the place a glance; but, accompanied by McGraw and Valeska, entered the store and spoke a few commonplaces to the proprietor, who, with hunted face, gazed anxiously at the officer. As for the girl, however, her eyes roamed vivaciously about the interior, taking in everything.

"Don't you suspect anyone?" she asked Gallino at length.

"Yassa, ma'am, I do. I say it ees Tony, my ol' clerk. He ees no good, that-a boy. I fire 'im. That ees-a one week ago. I tell-a da inspec'; he say-a no. Tony, he live across da street right-a now. He blow me up-a for sure. You wait teel I catch-a heem!"

McGraw laughed easily. "The old man's nutty about it, that's all. We looked up Antonio's record. He had good alibis, too. Nothing to that theory."

ASTRO seemed to come partially out of his daze and to take an interest in the chatter about him. "Well, Mr. McGraw," he announced, as he picked his way daintily among the debris, "I've seen what I care to inspect in this part of the building; now, if you will kindly leave me to wander about the place as I like, I may get those influences and manifestations that will enable me to use my crystals to good advantage."

The bulky officer immediately looked disappointed. He had evidently expected the Master of Mysteries to announce the author of the crime at once; and therefore it was with an unwilling nod that he withdrew.

"I'd like to go up on the roof first," said Astro to the Italian merchant. "It was there, I believe, that the latest explosion occurred."

Gallino showed the way up to a trap door in the rear, and left Valeska and her companion on the ruined roof.

"Ah, this is more like business!" he said, rubbing his hands gleefully with an odd, familiar gesture as he prepared to cope with the problem before him. "Valeska, my girl, see what you can find

around here that would interest a young pundit of your acquaintance." With this speech still on his lips, he walked directly toward the blank wall of the adjoining building. This rose three stories above Gallino's roof, and against it lay a number of pieces of scantling, untouched by the explosion. Over these the spare figure of the strange man bent in search, while Valeska, left to herself, inspected the hole that the dynamiter had torn in the middle front of the roof.

"Here we are!" came his voice gaily, almost a moment later. She ran over toward him in surprise, to find him gazing across at the buildings on the other side of the street. Between his thumb and forefinger he held a tiny object.

"I've got it!" he announced, and continued his inspection of the houses across the way.

"Got what?" she asked.

"The whole secret, so far as that goes. But, specifically, I've got what I came up here for. What did you come up for?"

"Because you did," she confessed. "And, too, on the chance of finding something."

"One doesn't solve mysteries that way, Valeska. There is no use looking for something unless you know what that something is. Have you decided how a bomb was exploded on top of this roof in broad daylight, with people watching the house? Until you've got that, you are nowhere."

"It might have been thrown from the top of a building up there."

"And anybody could have seen it. No. There was only one possible way, besides electric wiring, and here it is." He opened his hand and disclosed a small twisted bullet.

"Oh!" cried the girl. "They put the bomb there and then shot at it."

"Yes. Shot at it—and missed the first time. Now, here we find the place where the first bullet, going wild, hit this piece of scantling. This makes it merely a matter of surveying. If you will stand with the back of your head where the indentation of this bullet is, the sight across the approximate middle of the hole in the roof caused by the explosion, you will probably get some idea of where the bullet came from. What do you see?"

"Well, it might have been aimed from anyone of those three windows over there, in the building next to the shirt factory. I should say it came from the second one, where the potted plant is."

"One of them, certainly," answered Astro. "But we shall have to investigate them all, if we are to be conscientious about it, and for that purpose I suggest we look up McGraw again."

As they went down stairs, Valeska asked, "When did the first explosion occur?"

"At night."

"Then the bomb was merely hurled from the window?"

"Presumably. Nothing could be easier, and of course it could not be definitely seen or traced."

But here is McGraw; so let us take advantage of his office."

THE detective, though delighted to accompany Astro and his fair assistant into the house across the street, belittled the possibilities of finding anything there. "I've been into every room on the block, and I saw nothing. But I ain't got the second sight, o' course. All I can say is I hope you track 'em."

The party went up stairs into a cheap lodging house, accompanied by a frightened and voluble landlady, until they reached the third floor fronting on the street. McGraw knocked on the first door; but, getting no answer, motioned the landlady to unlock.

It was a small room, in great disorder, as if the tenant had suddenly taken his departure. The bed was unmade, the small bureau was covered with soiled linen, neckties, cigarette stubs, and the like, and a miscellaneous lot of shoes, magazines, newspapers, and rubbish were strewn on the floor. McGraw started to push his way in officiously; but the slim hand of the seer detained him.

"Kindly wait outside a moment," he commanded. "My assistant and I would prefer to enter alone. The vibrations, you know," he murmured, with a smile. The moment the door was shut behind them, two pairs of eyes ransacked the place, hunting for the things they had already decided to find. Astro's were the first to come to rest on a pile of crumpled newspapers hastily thrown beneath the unmade bed. In a flash he had seized them and was scanning them one by one. Finally he separated an "Era" from the rest of the penny sheets, turned it toward Valeska, and smiled. She saw that one page had been torn out.

"The advertising page," he remarked. He drew out the Black Hand letter and compared the torn scraps silently with the journal in his hand, nodded his head in confirmation, and silently opened the door.

"Who lives here?" he asked the woman of the house.

"Antonio Soroni."

Astro turned to the detective. "Arrest him tonight and bring him to my apartments at eight o'clock."

"Did he really do it?" asked McGraw eagerly.

Astro turned away in what seemed to be a brown study.

"Kindly don't put any questions to him," interrupted Valeska; "for he is now getting en rapport with the psychic surges of the locale."

"Now for the next room, please," announced the Master of Mysteries.

"Oh, that's vacant," said the landlady with arms akimbo. "A young girl had it until last Friday; but she's left."

Valeska turned at once. "When was the last explosion, did you say, Mr. McGraw?"

"Thursday."

"And when did you search these rooms?"

"Friday, miss. The girl was here when I came. Fine looker too, she was. A sort of laundress or seamstress or clerk or something; out of work right now, she said."

"Well, better look her up too, McGraw," said Astro, "and bring her around with Antonio."

He walked into the empty room, and Valeska followed him. The plain clothes man and the proprietress awaited patiently till they came out again, which was some fifteen minutes later. Their faces betrayed nothing whatever concerning their search.

NOW, the third door!" Astro's voice was sharp and commanding. The others pricked up their ears in expectation.

McGraw knocked; but there was no answer. He knocked again, and the listening party caught the sound of unintelligible cursing, heavy and befuddled. At this the officer took the key in haste, threw open the door, and looked inside, his hand on the butt of his revolver. One glance, and he had jumped inside, collaring the man on the bed.

"It's Bull O'Kennery, by all that's holy! Think o' meetin' you this way, Bull! Get up now, an' come along with us; for I've been huntin' you two weeks an' more! Where've you been spendin' your vacation, anyway?"

The prostrate man rubbed his thick knuckles into his eyes and expostulated brokenly with a maudlin drunken accent. In a jiffy McGraw had dragged him upright and placed him against the wall outside, snapping the bracelets on his wrists as he did so. Then the detective turned to Astro.

"This here's Bull, one o' the slickest dips in the burg. There's been a warrant out for his arrest for over two weeks now. He'll be the man we're after, too, most likely. Anyway, he'll have to go up and give an account."

Astro surveyed the disheveled prisoner nonchalantly, took up his hand, examined the palm, the lower lid of his eye, and listened to his heartbeats, his head against the man's chest. "Bah!" he exclaimed with a nauseated shrug of his shoulders, "he's been drunk for sixty hours. Take him away, McGraw. He makes me quite ill. I'll attend to the rest of this alone."

After the detective had led the miserable wretch shuffling down the stairs, the palmist and Valeska entered the room and threw up the blinds. It was a sickening enough sort of abode, smelling vilely of whisky, stale beer, and staler tobacco smoke. A sluggish kerosene lamp still burned weakly on the

Continued on page 18

THE FACE OF THE NIGHT



By Lowry W. Goode

I was sleeping, when into my dreams, love,
Came your face like a 'wondering start,
And I knew you of old!
Ah! what need to be told,
When I felt it and knew from my heart?

Long ago 'twas we met and we died, love.
In my dream I knew all of the past,
And my lips pressed your face.
Ah, God! that embrace!
I had found out my soul need at last.

But the dream had its waking, and now, love,
I strain and I tug at the veil,
And I pray to my God
For one smile, just a nod;
But I fall back and weep as I fail.

Yet I know now what never before, love:
You are mine, and your face is not far.
Though I clung to you tight
As you faded from sight,
I may see you again like Night's star.

There's a new prayer each night on my lips, love,
As I glide out of waking to sleep.
Oh, such a deep prayer
That your face will be there!
For I know what close vigils you keep.

Good night, love, good morn, love—what matters?
God's night has the star in the sky.
When you see the swift sight
Of a passionate light,
Oh, love, you may know it is I!

Dissect My Razor THE "GILLETTE"

Observe its convenience—its perfection in every detail.

Figure out how much time and money you can save by adopting the "Gillette" habit.

You will then know why over two million men are proclaiming the superiority of the "Gillette."

BECAUSE it gives you a clean, comfortable, safe shave in three to five minutes—no matter how inexperienced you are.

BECAUSE the harshest beard, though on the tenderest skin, willingly yields to the soft, easy action of the keen "Gillette" blade.

No Stopping No Honing

BECAUSE the holder lasts a lifetime.

BECAUSE its blades are so inexpensive that when dull you throw them away as you would an old pen.

King Gillette

The Gillette Safety Razor Set consists of a triple silver plated holder, 12 double-edged flexible blades—24 keen edges, packed in a velvet-lined leather case and the price is \$5.00.

COMBINATION SETS from \$6.50 to \$50.00

Ask your dealer for the "Gillette" today. If substitutes are offered, refuse them and write us at once for our booklet and free trial offer.

GILLETTE SALES CO.,
251 Times Bldg., New York
251 Kimball Bldg., Boston
251 Stock Exchange Bldg., Chicago

**Gillette Safety
NO STOPPING. NO HONING. Razor**



Mount Clemens MICHIGAN OPEN ALL THE YEAR ROUND

Mt. Clemens Mineral Water Baths are unrivaled for the treatment of

RHEUMATISM

and all

Nervous and Blood Diseases

200 bath houses, hotels and boarding houses offer accommodations and rates to suit all tastes and purses. Delightfully situated 20 miles from Detroit. Through trains from the East and West via Grand Trunk Railway System. Detroit suburban cars every half hour. Illust. book of Mt. Clemens mailed free. Address

**F. R. EASTMAN, Sec'y, Chamber of Commerce
Mt. Clemens, Mich.**



Strong Arms

For 10c. in stamps or coin

I will send, as long as they last, one of my charts showing exercises that will quickly build up shoulders, arms, forearms and hands without any apparatus. They are beautifully illustrated with 20 half-tone cuts. Regular price 25 cents.

PROF. ANTHONY BARKER
33 Barker Bldg., 110 West 42d St., N. Y. City

LABLACHE FACE POWDER

Perfect as a Rose

smooth and velvety—with the healthful coloring of youth is the complexion of every woman who uses Lablache, the modern beautifier. It prevents blemishes, caused by sun and wind, absorbs perspiration and overcomes that shiny and sallow appearance. It is the acme of purity—an everyday toilet necessity.

Refuse substitutes. They may be dangerous. Flesh, White, Pink or Cream, 50c. a box, of druggists or by mail. Send 10c. for sample.

BEN. LEVY CO., French Perfumers
Dept. Y, 125 Kingston St., Boston, Mass.

The Macdougall Street Affair

Continued from page 6

mantel. Amid the mass of tangled rubbish a bureau drawer stood half open, and Astro strode over to it. With a sudden gesture he took out a box of twenty-two caliber cartridges; then a woman's pocketbook, a ten-dollar bill, a piece of old fashioned paper fractional currency of fifty-cent denomination, and a horn handled shoe buttoner.

"I think we're getting at it now!" he exclaimed, his eyes alight with discovery.

"But, for Heaven's sake, which one of them did it? Antonio? Bull O'Kennery? Or the girl? Or all three together?"

"Or none of them?" smiled Astro in continuation of Valeska's questioning. But suddenly his mood changed as he weighed the bullet thoughtfully in his hand. "It's a very pretty piece of business," he went on. "What was it the old Frenchman said in his wisdom—*Cherchez la femme*? I'm afraid Mr. Gallino across the street is up against it; unless—hum—well, we'll see what McGraw gets into his net by nightfall."

Valeska never questioned further than the Master wished to answer; for she knew that it merely disturbed the marvelous deductive and introspective powers of his brain while they were at work; then, too, he preferred her, in her student days, to work out her own clues. Later, in case she had erred, he indulgently pointed out her mistakes to her. It was in some such tacit understanding that they now left the Macdougall-st. tenement and made their way back to Astro's cozy studio.

Once there, she could see that he had already solved the problem to his own satisfaction, from the way in which he donned his turban and robe, lighted his water pipe, and disposed himself on the cushioned divan in his favorite corner. His was assuredly a grotesque temperament. Above the top shelf a row of the ancient Toltec laughing heads grinned down on him; farther on, slabs of marvelous jade wrought with hieroglyphics and brazen implements gleamed dully, and added their touch of mystery to the man beneath. On the table were the sheets of paper and the dividers and rule with which he had been plotting an intricate curve in calculus, and this work he again took up immediately. Valeska withdrew. After an hour's work, heedless of the passage of dinner time, he smiled, carefully laid aside his instruments, and turned to a plaster cast hung against the wall.

"It is true, then, as I thought about you, Monsieur Voltaire," he murmured, half aloud. "The line of the upper half of the perimeter of that right ear of yours is a logarithmic spiral, of which the equation is $x^2 = 2ab + y$." He threw back his head and yawned.

Valeska glided in. "McGraw has come with Antonio," she whispered, "and has been waiting half an hour; but I wouldn't interrupt until you had finished your calculations. Shall I let them in now?"

Astro yawned again, luxuriously. "You are too indulgent of me, my dear girl, I'm very much afraid. The delay may cost Signor Gallino a thousand dollars, possibly his life. Do you happen to remember what date this is? But, there, it's really none of your business, I suppose. Yes, you may show them in."

IN another moment the officer appeared, leading by the sleeve a very badly frightened Italian. The moment the latter perceived the gorgeously picturesque figure of the palmist he rushed across the room and sank on the floor, clutching Astro by the knees.

"I no t'row-a da bomb!" he screamed. "I no t'row-a da bomb! Sacrament! I spik-a da trut! I no t'row-a da bomb, signor! Gallino he give-a me da bounce, si! I shake-a da fist in da face; but I no t'row-a da bomb!" At that the tears streamed from his wild eyes.

Astro waved his hand impatiently, took up the palm of the other, and began reading it, only to let it drop in a few moments.

"This young lady who roomed next to you," he said gently,—"you liked her, Antonio?"

The accused's eyes beamed. "Ah, si, signor! She the fine-a, nice-a girl. She spik-a to me, often."

"Very often?"

"Ah, no, signor! She lock herself in da room all-a da time. Some eve she come-a in, get-a da match. Da's all. Read-a da pape', maybe, sometime."

Astro cast a quick significant look at Valeska under his dark brows. "When did she come in and tear out a page from 'The Era,' Tony?"

Antonio scratched his head, laboring to remember. "Sometime dees-a last-a wik, early. Si. One night she come in, she say, 'Tony, I like-a get-a da posish. You lemme take-a da pape'. I bring 'er back.' I say no, I want-a da pape' por read-a to-night. She say, 'All-a right; I tear-a off da one-a piece.'"

Astro turned to McGraw. "You'd better turn this poor fellow loose, I think. He's innocent enough. I know what I want to know now."

"What do you know?" said the detective peevishly. "Seems to me it's time I was put wise to some of this game, ain't it?"

"I'll tell you in ten minutes, if you'll telephone a question to headquarters, or to the proper precinct, and find out if there has been any complaint made of the loss of a pocketbook containing a ten-dollar bill, a fifty-cent piece of the old fashioned paper currency, and a horn handled shoe buttoner. If there has, you'll want your friend Bull O'Kennery for that piece of work, too."

McGraw rose wonderingly and went to the telephone.

Astro called after him, "Tell them that if anyone does appear with that complaint, to

arrest him immediately and disarm him carefully."

Valeska waited till the detective had gone into the hall. "It was the girl, then, I see!" she cried. "But how in the world did she ever expect to collect the money without being caught?"

"That's the cleverest part of it," answered the seer meditatively. "You remember that she sent word to him the last time to have a thousand dollars with him night and day, and she'd let him know how to transfer the money?"

"Yes; but she hasn't let him know, so far."

"But she will to-night. You forget that tomorrow is the twelfth, the last day."

Valeska, extremely puzzled even yet as to how a lone girl was to accomplish her design, sat studying the matter over. Before she could reply, however, McGraw came back with an astonished look on his face.

"The girl called at the Mulberry-st. station yesterday and reported that her pocket had been picked. She described the money and the buttonhook all right; and I guess if you say so it must be one of Bull's jobs. But it's too late to catch her, I'm afraid."

"What did she look like?" asked Astro.

"Why, that's funny. This Gallino happened to be there, talking to the sergeant about his place bein' blown up, and he recognized her as a girl that used to work in the corner drug store near him. She spoke to him a few minutes, and then left; and Gallino told the sergeant about it."

Astro clapped his hands. "Selah!" he exclaimed. "The ether waves have met at last! Wait five minutes. I must consult my crystal."

The two watched him carefully.

Finally he looked up. "We must hurry!" he exclaimed sharply. "To-night a man will come to see Gallino, and as soon as he's alone will demand the thousand dollars."

"A man?" queried Valeska. "I thought it was the girl."

"The girl?" said McGraw in bewilderment. "Well, never mind. Whoever it is, we'll get him—or her. The house is watched."

Story of the Tramp Steamer

Continued from page 8

six thousand bushels was put aboard once in Philadelphia in seven hours. Sometimes as many as eight spouts are used from the elevator to the vessel, and the grain thunders into the hold with the speed and noise of an avalanche, the ship visibly sinking in the water during the process.

Meantime the Captain and his agents are attending to the various clearance requirements of the ship. The custom house officials watch the grain going in, and when all is stored and the hatches closed, they return a manifest to their department. Up to this time the Captain of the Redmond has had little to do with all these transactions, except to bring his vessel safely into port to load. When he receives his clearance papers, however, he at once becomes the all pervading personality. Previous to this he has signed documents acknowledging the receipt of so much grain in "apparent good condition," and others in which he has obligated himself to deliver it in the same condition, barring "collision, fire, shipwreck, piracy, or stranding," etc. He has also bills of lading and innumerable certificates from weighers and inspectors, not the least important of which relates to the seaworthy condition of the ship itself to undertake the voyage.

The Problem of the Crew

THE question of the crew often becomes a serious problem before the tramp can finally weigh anchor. As a tramp seldom sees her home port inside of three years, it is hardly to be expected that the sailors will remain content with her wandering lot during that entire period. On reaching the first port some of them drop out, and more at the next, so that after a year only the officers of the original complement remain. In consequence it is not at all unusual to see a tramp manned entirely by Chinese, and in some cases by Malays and Lascars, which the Captain has been obliged to ship in the far East.

The latter nationalities are not allowed to land in this country, and when a tramp with such a crew arrives at one of our ports to load, she is subject to the closest scrutiny by the United States officials, to prevent any of the men deserting.

It is a source of wonder to the layman that the officers, so comparatively few in number, will trust themselves at sea with these often desperate Asiatics; but they do not so regard it. The Captain is absolute and supreme on his ship while on the high seas, and the English maritime law is such that it practically gives him the right to take a human life to quell a mutiny.

THAT the Captains feel full security in the knowledge of the power that they have a right to exercise was never better illustrated than in the case of the Jane Burrell, whose story has been permanently identified with the annals of Philadelphia's shipping. In this case Captain Robertson was practically alone at the head of a mutinous crew; but his supreme self confidence allowed him to start on a six thousand-mile voyage to the Argentine Republic, when through the refusal of the men to

"Watched!" sneered the Master of Mysteries. "From the outside, I suppose?"

"Certainly," answered McGraw hotly.

"Fools!" said Astro. "Anybody can enter. You can't keep innocent people out of the house. This man may go in, present a pistol at Gallino's head, get the money, and walk out. Who's to suspect a casual visitor?" He paused a moment to don his street coat. "Gallino may even be chloroformed. We've got to get there at once. Hurry!"

As they hastened along to the cabstand, McGraw grunted in ill temper. "But who's the man that's after it, I'd like to know?"

HE received no answer; nor was a word

spoken all the time that they were being driven to Macdougall and South Fourth-sts., and when they had alighted there, paid their fare, and looked down the dark sidewalk, no one could be observed. No. 950 showed no sign of life. They started to walk briskly toward Gallino's, when suddenly a man's form emerged from the Italian's doorway and hastened down the steps.

Instantly Astro drew his revolver and shouted to McGraw, "That's the one! Get him!"

At the exclamation, the figure turned on the bottom step, shrank back in surprise, and, becoming entangled in the long coat, fell across the balustrade to the stone sidewalk. Instantly, with a frightful roar, a terrific explosion rent the air. Astro and his companions staggered back, and above the crash of falling debris the Master of Mysteries could be heard shouting:

"That's what was meant for Gallino if he hadn't paid to-night!"

Then the three rushed anxiously forward to where the limp figure lay in a distorted knot on the flagging. The clothing had been torn to shreds, and a pool of blood encircled the prostrate form. The body lay face downward; so that the detective had to turn it over. He struck a match and cried in bewilderment:

"Why, it's a girl in man's clothes!"

Astro turned slowly away. "There will be no more bombs exploded in Macdougall-st. for awhile," he said.

The next story in the "Master of Mysteries" series, entitled "The Denton Boudoir Murder," will be published June 21.